
Spring 4-11-2016

Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

Edward R. Udovic C.M., Ph.D.
DePaul University, eudovic@depaul.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj>

Recommended Citation

Udovic, Edward R. C.M., Ph.D. (2016) "Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," *Vincentian Heritage Journal*: Vol. 33 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol33/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Vincentian Journals and Publications at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vincentian Heritage Journal by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

EDWARD R. UDOVIC, C.M., PH.D.



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



Introduction

The history of pilgrimage and pilgrimage hospitality has deep living roots within Christianity and Catholicism. Within the Vincentian tradition there is also a long tradition of this hospitality with pilgrimage visits to sites in Paris and France linked especially with the relics of Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and the places intimately associated with his life and works. This article will present an overview of the history of these Vincentian pilgrimages, and present a contemporary case study of how DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, uses pilgrimages (or Heritage Tours) as a tool to enhance mission engagement among its core constituencies.

When the elderly Vincent de Paul died early in the morning of 27 September 1660 preparations were made for his requiem mass and burial to take place the next day. He was laid to rest in a specially-prepared crypt in the choir of the chapel at the mother house of the Congregation of the Mission, located on the rue faubourg Saint-Denis just outside the city gates of Paris. The church was filled to overflowing for these obsequies.¹ Later in November, a formal memorial service for Vincent was held at the church of Saint Germain-le-Auxerrois located across from the Louvre Palace in Paris. An epic two-hour long *oraison funèbre* was offered on the occasion by Henri de Maupas du Tour the bishop of Le Puy.² This commemoration also received great publicity, and attracted a large and distinguished audience.

The founder of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, the Ladies of Charity and the Confraternities of Charity had died as a revered religious figure. Vincent de Paul had not only become an iconic symbol of the successful Tridentine reform of the French Church, but also the beloved “*pater pauperum*”; the so-called “apostle of charity.”³

Monsieur Vincent’s tomb immediately became the site of pious visits not only by his followers, but by all those who considered the recently-deceased priest to have been a “saint”: that is to say a heroic example of a disciple of Christ. These visits were welcomed by the Lazarists. Such unsolicited and spontaneous visits demonstrated the deceased’s reputation for holiness among the faithful.⁴ These proto-pilgrims sought a comforting proximity to the earthly remains of Vincent, resting within the hallowed walls of the church where he had worshipped, within the priory of Saint-Lazare (where he had first taken-up residence in January 1632), and within the city of Paris (where he had lived for fifty years). Paris, of course, was the capital of a very Catholic kingdom whose faith and its traditions were firmly embedded in public consciousness and in all aspects of daily life.

¹ For more information on the events surrounding the death and canonization of Vincent de Paul see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *Henri de Maupas du Tour: The Funeral Oration for Vincent de Paul* (Chicago: DePaul University Vincentian Studies Institute, 2015). Hereafter cited as *Maupas du Tour*.

² For more information on Maupas du Tour see, *Maupas du Tour*, Chapter 1: “The Panegyrist,” pp. 13-32.

³ Two popular devotional titles traditionally used to describe Vincent de Paul.

⁴ See the text of the bull of canonization *Superna Hierusalem* in: “Circular of Mr. Couty,” *Circulars of the Superiors-General and the Superioresses to the Daughters of Charity: and notices upon the deceased Sisters of the Community* (Emmitsburg, Md.: St. Joseph’s, 1870), 62-63. Hereafter, *Superna Hierusalem*.



B. Vincentius in extremis positus, sacra
Communione reficitur.

The death of Vincent de Paul; receiving Viaticum.
Period etching.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



In early 1661, the Lazarists commissioned an official biography of their late founder. Written by the well-known theologian Louis Abelly and published in 1664, this three volume work documented the life and works of the “venerable servant of God.”⁵ This was done in preparation for what was presumed to be the eventual introduction of his canonization cause, which would require just such an historical account.⁶ The canonization rules then in effect typically required a fifty year waiting period before the Holy See would even consider a candidate for sainthood. This delay was designed as a “cooling off” period to see if the candidate’s public reputation for holiness would hold up for a long period after his/her death. These rules also required that there be no premature public claim of sanctity for the candidate since this judgment belonged to the Church, and indeed to the pope alone. In fact, the Church’s working presumption was that the candidate *was not* worthy of canonization. The Church’s representative (officially known as the “Promoter of the Faith”) in this juridical process was popularly known as the “devil’s advocate.” It was this official’s job to use a fine-toothed comb to look for *any* reason for the Church *not* to canonize. Guilty until proven innocent was the presumption. The reason for this caution on the part of the Church and the subsequent length, complexity, and cost of the canonization process was because, in the end, the pope would be certifying by the conferral of the title “saint” that the candidate had led a life of heroic sanctity and discipleship. Further, it would also signify beyond any doubt that God had deigned to confirm that

⁵ See Louis Abelly, *Life of the Venerable Servant of God: Vincent de Paul*, trans. by William Quinn, F.S.C., and ed. by John E. Rybolt, C.M., 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1987). See also, Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life & Works of St. Vincent de Paul*, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1987). For a contemporary one volume biography see, Bernard Pujo, *Vincent de Paul: The Trailblazer*, trans. by Gertrude Graubert Champe (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).

⁶ For a brief discussion of the history of canonization in the Catholic Church see, Kenneth L Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

heroic sanctity by effecting miracles (almost always inexplicable healings) prayed for by the faithful asking the intercession of the person from his/her presumed place among the blessed souls in heaven.⁷

According to this theology, God in his providence granted these “miracles” so that the faith of believers would be strengthened; thus enabling them to follow the example of the saints in living out their own Christian discipleship. In the early modern-era, the canonization of a saint was a relatively rare event highlighting by its rarity the importance of these revered figures in the communion of saints, and their continuing role in salvation history.⁸

“Saint” Vincent de Paul

In 1697, the Lazarists began the necessary preparations for introducing the cause of Vincent de Paul.⁹ Because of these efforts, the cause was ready to be introduced in Rome at the earliest possible moment: October 1709. Louis XIV, nearing the end of his long reign, enthusiastically endorsed the effort. After all, the canonization of this loyal servant of the Bourbon dynasty and the Gallican Church was also a matter of great national pride for France. The headquarters of the tireless efforts to promote Vincent de Paul for canonization was the mother-house of the Lazarists in Paris. Here the memory of the founder decades after his death was still palpable through the presence of his tomb, his treasured personal possessions, letters and archival records, and also the carefully preserved room in which he had died. The ecclesial memory of Vincent de Paul also continued to be preserved in the works of the communities he founded, which were now woven into the fabric of *Ancien Régime* Catholicism in France and elsewhere in Catholic Europe.

Once the Vatican decree recognizing the heroism of Vincent’s virtues was issued in 1727, the further progress of the cause depended on the identification, documentation, and papal acceptance of miracles attributed to his intercession.¹⁰ Three authenticated miracles were needed for a decree of beatification to be issued. By 1729, four from among the numerous accounts of proposed miracles that had been presented were accepted.¹¹ Benedict XIII therefore beatified Vincent de Paul in Rome at the Vatican basilica on 21 August of that year. A minimum of two additional authenticated miracles were then needed for a decree of canonization to be issued. Furthermore, these miracles had to have taken place since the beatification. As a matter of fact, it took very little time for a number of these “miracles” to be documented and submitted to Rome for judgment. Among these, the necessary minimum of two miracles were accepted and approved by the pope on 24

⁷ *Superna Hierusalem*, 44.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ For a comprehensive review of the canonization process for Vincent de Paul see, *Maupas du Tour*, Chapter 3: “The Canonization of Vincent de Paul: ‘*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum*,’” pp. 59-81.

¹⁰ *Superna Hierusalem*, 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

June 1636.¹² The canonization of Vincent de Paul by Clement XII took place in Rome at the basilica of Saint John Lateran on 16 June 1737, the Feast of the Holy Trinity.¹³

Vincent de Paul had been dead for a little less than seventy-seven years. By Roman standards, this was a relatively short time to elapse from death to halo. Vincent's beatification and canonization also brought with them the official sanction for his public veneration throughout the universal Church by the insertion of his feast day (then July 19th) into the liturgical calendar, with accompanying texts for the celebration of festal and votive masses as well as the various hours of the Divine Office.¹⁴

Both the beatification and canonization were celebrated with great solemnity and festivity back in France, especially at the Lazarists' *maison-mère* in Paris.¹⁵ These magnificent octaves of ceremonies were attended by countless pilgrims and the highest figures of Church and State. They established a new public image and re-definition of purpose for the church which necessitated a remodeling of the space. The pilgrimage focus of the chapel was Vincent's skeletal remains (now first-class relics), exhumed from their original resting place in the choir crypt and publicly displayed (encased within a life-like wax figure of the saint). These relics were placed within a magnificent silver and glass reliquary, and set above the altar in one of the church's side chapels. In the decree of canonization, the pope granted indulgences in perpetuity to pilgrims who visited Vincent's tomb, and a special indulgence for those who visited on his feast day.¹⁶ The Lazarists commissioned a series of epic-paintings of the life, work, and miracles of the new saint from some of the most prominent artists of the day. These also were put on display in the chapel to highlight its new public role as a place of pilgrimage now fully dedicated to the sainted memory and thaumaturgic remains of "Saint" Vincent de Paul. Engravings of these paintings were available for purchase by pilgrims in a gift shop located in the church sacristy, presumably along with other devotional items branded with the image of the new saint. Hospitality, devotion AND commerce have always been close partners in the pilgrimage experience.

These first artistic expressions of public devotion were immediately followed by masses of widely-diffused reliquaries (containing "first," "second," or "third" class relics), statues (of all sizes, shapes, and materials), stained glass windows for churches, engravings, paintings, and an infinite variety of inexpensive holy cards. These items were produced in a supply and demand market response to the public devotion to the new saint. For those who could not come on pilgrimage to Vincent de Paul in Paris, Vincent de Paul could easily come to them. But, in the end, these items were a poor substitute for a pilgrimage made to Saint-Lazare, and actual access to the saint's remains. Of course Saint-Lazare was not alone as a Parisian pilgrimage site. Just a twenty-minute walk away was another venerable and

¹² *Ibid.*, 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

popular site housing Jesus' "crown of thorns." This relic, and other relics of the Passion, had been purchased and brought back from the Holy Land by the crusader-king Saint Louis IX. From 1248 they were kept in a breathtaking gothic rayonnant reliquary-chapel (the famed "Sainte-Chapelle"),¹⁷ located in the center of the *île de la cité* not far from the cathedral of Notre Dame, itself a traditional site of pilgrimage.

Another famous Parisian pilgrimage destination was the relics of the city's patron Sainte-Geneviève.¹⁸ These were housed at the abbaye Sainte-Geneviève located on Mont Sainte-Geneviève in the Latin Quarter. Saint-Lazare now joined these oft-visited sites on well-known and well-publicized pilgrimage itineraries. The fame of these shrines was always measured by the number of pilgrims welcomed through their doors.

An Old Shrine Unexpectedly Disappears and a New One Eventually Emerges

At the end of August 1792, the Lazarists handed over the keys for Saint-Lazare to officials of the revolutionary government. The legislative decree dissolving all of the remaining religious communities in France and confiscating all their land, possessions, and other wealth went into effect. The revolutionary officials sealed the archives and undertook an inventory of the contents of all the buildings.¹⁹ However, the former Lazarists somehow were able to quietly spirit away the remains of their sainted founder. These were held by the community's lawyer throughout the revolutionary period, kept safely hidden in a non-descript wooden box. They were so well-hidden, in fact, that the public presumption was they had been lost like so many of the other relics destroyed during the anti-Christian phase of the revolution. Vincent's great silver chasse was confiscated and melted down along with many of the gold and silver objects seized from the nobility and the church. The revolution had to be defended and paid for after all. The works of art in the chapel became property of the state and were carefully inventoried and warehoused. The once bustling chapel and pilgrimage site now stood stripped, abandoned, and forlorn.²⁰

The Bourbon monarchy, the nobility, and the Church fell together, and fell quickly. In fact, the first act of revolutionary violence preceding the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 had been the sacking of Saint-Lazare's granaries the previous day.²¹ The monarchy came to a bloody end with the executions of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in 1793. The French Church entered an era of tumult, danger, and previously unimaginable change. There were worse things to come, however, as the Reign of Terror and its accompanying

¹⁷ For a brief description of Sainte-Chapelle please see, Fred J. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History* (Stamford, Connecticut: Cengage Learning, 2008), 198.

¹⁸ See, Moshe Sluhovsky, *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Press, 1997).

¹⁹ For the history of the Congregation of the Mission from its revolutionary suppression in 1792 to its re-foundation in the nineteenth century see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *Jean-Baptiste Étienne and the Vincentian Revival* (Chicago: Vincentian Studies Institute, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Étienne*.

²⁰ *Étienne*, 19.

²¹ For an account of the sack of Saint-Lazare see, *Ibid.*, 7-15.



The reliquary shrine enclosing the remains of Vincent de Paul. His face and hands are covered in a wax mask. Installed in the Vincentian *maison-mère* in 1830.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



violence dawned. The first massacres of the clergy began in early September 1792.²² Over the next three decades, France would go through all the dizzying phases of its revolution, enter and exit the Napoleonic imperial era, and finally emerge with the backwards-looking restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Louis XVI's oldest brother who would reign as Louis XVIII. In 1825, Louis XVIII in turn was succeeded by his brother who became Charles X.

On 24 April 1830, the remains of Vincent de Paul were carried in a long solemn procession (or "translation") through the streets of Paris from the cathedral of Notre Dame.²³ Led by the archbishop of Paris, Hyacinthe-Louis de Quélen, this was the first public religious procession allowed to take place in Paris since the Revolution. After the fall of Napoleon, the Bourbon Restoration was dedicated to a return to the pre-revolutionary conservative religious and political status quo of the union of altar and throne.²⁴ It seemed as if Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Church were destined to return to their old roles as well. Vincent's remains (once more encased within a very life-like wax effigy) now rested in a magnificent new silver and glass casket created by the great Parisian silversmith Jean-Baptiste Claude Odiot, donated by the archdiocese of Paris. The destination of this procession was the chapel of the *maison-mère* of the Lazarists; the "new" Saint-Lazare located at 95 rue de Sèvres. The purpose of the procession was to restore the relics of Vincent de Paul to public devotion and pilgrimage for the first time in almost four decades.

The Lazarists themselves had been legally restored as a religious community by the Emperor Napoleon.²⁵ This restoration had been confirmed by Louis XVIII in 1816.²⁶ The

²² For a survey of the impact of the Revolution on the Catholic Church see, for example, Michelle Vovelle, *La Révolution contre l'église: De raison à l'être supreme* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1988).

²³ Hyacinthe-Louis de Quélen, *Mandement de Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Paris, qui ordonne que le Te Deum sera chanté dans toutes les églises de son Diocèse, en actions de grâces de la Translation solennelle du Corps de saint Vincent de Paul, et qui publié les Procès-Verbaux dressés à l'occasion de cette Solennité* (Paris: Adrien Le Clere, 1830).

²⁴ For a history of the Restoration in France, see, for example, Benôit Yvert, *La Restauration. Les idées et les hommes* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2013).

²⁵ See, John W. Carven, C.M., *Napoleon and the Lazarists* (Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

²⁶ *Actes du Gouvernement Français concernant la Congrégation de la Mission dite de Saint-Lazare, fondée par Saint Vincent de Paul* (Paris: Congrégation de la Mission, 1902), 113-114.

community had been quick to remind the restored king of their long record of loyalty to the traditional monarchy as the “*prêtres des Bourbons*.” The monarch granted the Congregation of the Mission a new headquarters and an annual subsidy in 1817.²⁷ The building was the former *hôtel particulier* of the Ducs des Lorge. This location had the added advantage of being very near to the new *maison-mère* of the Daughters of Charity, situated just around the corner at 140 rue du Bac. Napoleon had restored the legal recognition of the Daughters in 1800 because of the indispensable social utility of their works of mercy.²⁸

The old clos Saint-Lazare and its complex of buildings on the rue Saint-Denis, though still extant, had been turned into a women’s prison in 1794.²⁹ The government could not now afford to return this facility and land to the Lazarists. This led to the king’s gift to them of the new house, at a new location, at a much lower cost. In 1823, as part of a prison expansion, the old chapel on the rue Saint-Denis finally was torn down. There was no going back.

Since the Lazarists could not regain possession of their former property and the buildings on the rue Saint-Denis, they were determined that the new reliquary chapel and mother house on the rue de Sèvres would make a public impression on pilgrims that was every bit as indelible as the original. Forty years of careful design and construction would follow (at great expense) to achieve this goal. The centerpiece of the “new” Saint-Lazare would be a public chapel (the first church to be built in Paris since the Revolution) accessible to pilgrims directly from the bustling rue de Sèvres on the left bank of the Seine. Unlike the original shrine at old Saint-Lazare which had to be retro-fitted into a side chapel of an already existing church; at the new Saint-Lazare, the entire chapel was built and lavishly decorated in the classical revival style and became a building-sized reliquary reminiscent of the effect previously achieved at the medieval Sainte-Chapelle.

With a very tight urban building site and the need for direct street access, the chapel could not be a free-standing edifice. Rather, it had to be embedded within the rest of the large mother-house complex whose many buildings (located from 93 to 97 rue de Sèvres) also served as the international headquarters for the Congregation of the Mission. The facility housed numerous priests, brothers, seminarians, and novices. The eventual addition of two side aisles, with tribunes above, expanded the original chapel to its present dimensions.

From the moment a pilgrim entered the new edifice from the entrance on the rue de Sèvres, every interior architectural element and decoration created sight lines whose sole purpose was to focus one’s full attention on the remains of Vincent de Paul, elevated in an architectural setting at the summit above the main altar. The intended effect was to draw the pilgrim physically into the chapel, led by the riveting lode-star of Vincent’s reliquary. The remains themselves were directly accessible to pilgrims via an enclosed

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 113-116.

²⁸ *Étienne*, 51.

²⁹ For more information on the history of Saint-Lazare as a women’s prison see: <https://vincentiancollections.depaul.edu/saintlazare/pages/default.aspx>

marble staircase built into the rear of the altar/shrine structure. These stairs delivered pilgrims to an unexpected intimacy with the saint's luxurious *chasse*, ultra-realistic wax effigy, and most importantly his relics. The carefully planned iconography of the chapel, especially the brilliant *trompe l'oeil* mural of the apotheosis of Vincent de Paul filling the vault directly above the reliquary, invited pilgrims not only to visit the remains of the Saint of Charity but also to be reminded of his characteristic virtues and legacy. This was an invitation to the pilgrim to be moved to adopt those same virtues and imitate that same charity towards the poor in the good works of their own lives as Christ's disciples. The Latin scriptural quotation framing the mural reads "*pertransit benefaciendo*," or "He went about doing good."³⁰

The restoration of the political and religious status quo of the *Ancien Régime* was an abject failure. The Bourbon monarchy was easily overthrown in just a few days by the July revolution of 1830, only a few months after the translation of Vincent's relics. The succeeding July monarchy of the Orleanist, Louis-Philippe, lasted only eighteen years.³¹ The age of political revolution was accompanied by the scientific and industrial revolutions, with the accompanying cultural, economic, social, and religious transformations that ushered modernity in with a rush.³²

The original re-foundation of the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity by their elderly revolutionary survivors in the first decades of the nineteenth century had also been backwards looking and largely unsuccessful. A new Vincentian generation gradually emerged, however, whose members and whose leaders looked forward to meeting the challenges of their rapidly changing world.³³ This generation also established a vibrant new international lay organization of charity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, founded in 1833 in Paris by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his companions.³⁴ These nineteenth-century men and women around the world saw in their patron Vincent de Paul a timeless example of faith, values, and sanctity. Saint Vincent provided a model for how they as Christians could best respond to the challenges of charity of their own age, as he had responded to the challenges of his time.

One of the leaders of this new Vincentian generation was Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.³⁵ Étienne served as the fourteenth superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and

³⁰ Acts 10:28; See John E. Rybolt, C.M., *In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul. A Guide to Vincentian France* (Chicago: Vincentian Studies Institute, 2007), 6-10. Hereafter cited as *Footsteps*.

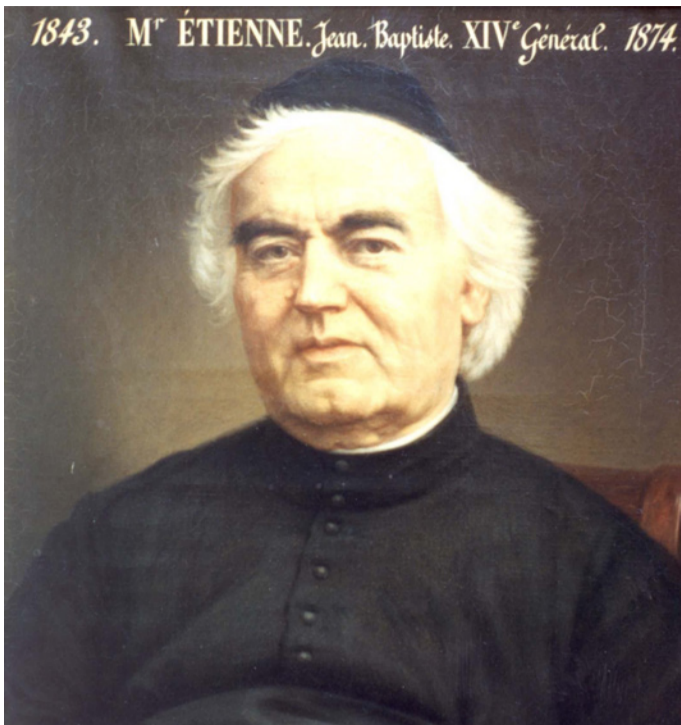
³¹ For an overview of the July Monarchy see, for example, Pierre de la Gorce, *Louis-Phillipe (1830-1848)* (Paris: Editions Frédéric Patat, 2014).

³² For an overview of the revolutionary era see, for example, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

³³ See Étienne throughout.

³⁴ See, for example, Raymond L. Sickinger, "Frédéric Ozanam: Systemic Thinking and Systemic Change," *Vincentian Heritage* 32:1 (2014): pp. 136-164.

³⁵ For a contemporary biography of Étienne see, Edouard Rosset, C.M., *Vie de M. Etienne, XIVe, supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission et la Compagnie des Filles de la Charité* (Paris: Gaume, 1881).



The official portrait of Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.
Fourteenth Superior General of the Congregation
of the Mission.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



the Company of the Daughters of Charity from his election in 1843 to his death in 1874.³⁶ It was Étienne who was ultimately responsible for the establishment of the reliquary shrine and chapel at rue de Sèvres. He also was responsible for establishing a parallel shrine complex, the so-called “Berceau,”³⁷ at the saint’s birthplace near Dax in the southwest of France in 1864.³⁸ These Vincent pilgrimage sites would be linked with the contemporary transformation of the Daughters’ chapel on the rue du Bac into a famed pilgrimage chapel commemorating the Marian apparitions and the revelation of the “Miraculous Medal” there to Sister Catherine Labouré from April to November 1830.³⁹ This chapel⁴⁰ would also house the remains of Vincent de Paul’s friend, collaborator, and co-founder of the Daughters of Charity, Saint Louise de Marillac, Mademoiselle Le Gras.⁴¹ These two Parisian sites became, and remain, the international focus of Vincentian religiosity, spirituality, and pilgrimage.

In addition, during the nineteenth century many of the other sites in France closely associated with Vincent de Paul, i.e., the churches at Folleville in the department of the Somme,⁴² at Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne in the department of the Ain,⁴³ at Château l’êveque in the Department of the Dordogne,⁴⁴ at St. Vincent de Paul in the department of the

³⁶ For an account of Étienne’s role in the nineteenth-century re-foundation of the Daughters of Charity see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., “Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M., and the Re-foundation of the Daughters of Charity,” *Vincentian Heritage* 31:2 (2012): pp. 9-23.

³⁷ See, n.a., *Compte-Rendu de la cérémonie du 24 avril 1864 et des Solennités Religieuses qui ont suivi l’inauguration des monuments élevés à la mémoire de saint Vincent de Paul* (Dax: Reveil des Landes, 1864).

³⁸ *Footsteps*, 283-293.

³⁹ For an overview of Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal see, René Laurentin, *La vie authentique de Catherine Labouré* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1986).

⁴⁰ The chapel at rue du Bac also houses the reliquary containing Vincent de Paul’s heart. See, *Footsteps*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 204-216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 410-417.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 319-322.

Landes,⁴⁵ and at Buzet-sur-Tarn in the Department of the Haut-Garonne⁴⁶ established site commemorations for pilgrims linking these places with the life of the saint. With the growth of the middle classes and the invention and rapid introduction of the railroad and steamships beginning in the mid-nineteenth century the world began to shrink. What had once been long, difficult, or even impossible pilgrimage journeys now became doable and even common-place.⁴⁷ All of the Vincentian pilgrimage sites in France were ready and eager to extend hospitality welcoming new generations of pilgrims. They remain so today.

21st century Vincentian pilgrimages: A DePaul University Case Study in Mission Effectiveness

Founded in Chicago in 1898 by the members of Vincent de Paul's Congregation of the Mission, DePaul University has for some years been the largest Catholic university in the United States. It is also one of the largest private, teaching universities in the nation. The university has approximately 25,000 students, 1,000 full-time faculty members (serving in ten schools and colleges with more than 350 degree programs), 1,400 full-time staff members, and more than 160,000 living alumni. The university's two large urban campuses are in Chicago's Loop and the Lincoln Park neighborhood on the city's near-north side. It has several suburban campuses, international study sites, and also delivers a growing percentage of its courses online. Its budget is in excess of a half-billion dollars, and its endowment hovers around a half-billion dollars. In June 2014 it completed a successful four year capital campaign raising a record 326 million dollars.⁴⁸

The university serves a very diverse urban community, and by choice and effort reflects this diversity to a remarkable degree. Presently thirty-three percent of its students are students of color.⁴⁹ Many students are also first generation college-attendees, and come from traditionally under-represented and often under-prepared educational populations. A large number of these students also come from economically distressed backgrounds.

At DePaul University the ultimate measure of our success is in maintaining accessibility, affordability, and attainment. We cannot provide accessibility without providing affordability, and access without attainment is access to nothing. Attainment means our students receive the prized degree for which they entered, and are sent out into the world with that degree as empowered life-long learners.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 336-338.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Suzanne K. Kaufman, "Selling Lourdes: Pilgrimage, Tourism, and the Mass-Marketing of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France," in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe*, Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 63-88.

⁴⁸ For DePaul University's key facts, rankings, and academic distinctions see:

<http://www.depaul.edu/about/Pages/key-facts.aspx>

<http://www.depaul.edu/about/Pages/rankings.aspx>

<http://resources.depaul.edu/distinctions/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴⁹ For more information on diversity at DePaul see: <http://offices.depaul.edu/diversity/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁰ For more information on DePaul's commitment to access and attainment see: <http://resources.depaul.edu/caa/Pages/default.aspx>

The university's current president, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., has noted: "DePaul University is not its buildings; those change. DePaul is not any specific program; those change too. DePaul is the collective body of men and women who believe in an idea: that an extraordinary education should not only be available to those with great means, but to all those with great dreams."⁵¹ The official Latin title of the Congregation of the Mission is "*Congregatio Missionis*." A literal translation of this title into English would be "a gathering of people coming together for the sake of the Mission." Thus the "Vincentian" identity of DePaul University is not, should not and cannot be limited to the handful of aging Vincentian priests and brothers who serve at the university. In the truest sense of the word, everyone who works at DePaul University and who is motivated and even captivated by its educational mission can truly claim to be a "Vincentian." We are all gathered together for the sake of our mission; for the sake of our students. This would, of course, include the large numbers of members of the university community who are not Catholic, Christian, or even professed believers in any organized religion.

From its foundation as a Catholic and Vincentian university, DePaul has chosen to define itself by offering hospitality designed to build and sustain a vibrant academic community around the highest common denominator which unites ALL faculty, staff, and students: their shared humanity. This welcome always respects community members' God-given dignity as individual human persons on the terms of their own unique set of self-definitions. This inclusivity invites community members, in turn, to accept the diversities of other members of the community with the same respect that their diversities have been welcomed and honored. Since this community is an academic community, this value is also designed to be the curricular and co-curricular basis of an ongoing critical study, reflection, and free debate on the human experience in all of its complexity and mystery. It is also the basis for the dedication of the academic enterprise at DePaul to applying knowledge in ways that serve the common good and lead to systemic change, justice, and sustainability especially through preferential efforts on behalf of poverty-stricken, marginalized, and vulnerable populations.⁵²

There are presently more than 4,000 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States; these include public and private colleges and universities, public and private community colleges, and new online "for-profit" entities. These schools currently enroll more than 21 million students.⁵³ No two of these institutions are exactly alike. There is something distinctive about each one of them. This gives each institution a challenge to offer a brand-promise which distinguishes it from its competitors. This also gives prospective college students in the United States an unparalleled access to higher educational choices.

The distinctive characteristics of DePaul University are captured by the proverbial "name above the door." Since 1898, DePaul University has looked to its "patron" Vincent de

⁵¹ Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., *Inauguration: Celebrating DePaul at its Best*, 20 November 2004: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/speeches-and-communications/2005/Pages/celebrating-depaul-at-its-best.aspx>

⁵² See, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *About Saint Vincent de Paul and DePaul University's Catholic, Vincentian and Urban Identity* (Chicago: DePaul University, 2001).

⁵³ For current U.S. higher education statistics see: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98>



Vincent's Circle, located at the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University, Chicago, IL.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



Paul and to his faith, values, vision and mission as the source of its own distinctive identity as a Catholic institution of higher education in the United States. What the university does, and how, when, where and why it does it, is always focused on our students and their success. These efforts align our institutional mission statement,⁵⁴ strategic plans,⁵⁵ and budgets to our historic identity and brand-promise as a Vincentian and Catholic university, with Vincent de Paul's "name above the door." Within DePaul University, the overall responsibility for institutional mission effectiveness rests with the Office of Mission and Values.⁵⁶ The Office is headed by the Senior Executive for University Mission, who serves as the institution's Chief Mission Officer and who reports directly to the president. The "mission" of this office is stated in its present strategic plan:

Guided by the university's 2018 strategic plan and its mission statement, the Office of Mission and Values collaborates with university departments and constituencies in ways that measurably enhance their understanding and support of DePaul University's distinctive Catholic, Vincentian, and urban identity. Together we provide the leadership that enables the university to achieve excellence in its educational mission, serve its diverse student body, and maximize its strategic capacities. As the premier international resource for Vincentian studies, the Office also serves a wide range of external constituencies who seek to deepen their engagement with Vincentian history, spirituality, and service.

Over the last two decades, this office has coordinated the university's efforts to become, and remain, a "mission-driven" institution. At the governance level, these efforts have

⁵⁴ To access the DePaul University mission statement see: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/about/Pages/MissionStatement.aspx>

⁵⁵ To access the DePaul University strategic plan "Vision 2018" see: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/strategic-directions/vision-2018/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁶ For more information on the activities of the university's Office of Mission and Values see: <https://mission.depaul.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

been overseen by a Mission Committee of the university's Board of Trustees. These efforts have always been integrated within the goals of successive university strategic plans.⁵⁷ They have been largely successful. This "mission-driven" identity has been repeatedly confirmed by numerous accrediting agencies in their visits, by the university's own ongoing evaluation and assessment efforts, and by the testimonies and stories told and re-told by community members themselves. This signal achievement has taken place within the context of the university's rapid growth from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, and the changes that continue to take place within the institution given the rapid and stressed evolution of higher education in the United States.

The strategic planning model that has guided the efforts of the Office of Mission and Values and its institutional collaborators over the decades is one of patient, sustained organic growth symbolized by the use of the metaphor of a "ladder of engagement." This model has one goal: to invite and empower all members of the university community to understand, support, and shape the institution's defining Vincentian and Catholic identity from the moment they first join the community. The model then takes carefully planned and carefully assessed steps in six areas to invite engaged members of the community to higher levels of understanding, engagement, and leadership. These areas include:

- Introducing and Orienting
- Building Community
- Educating and Enriching
- Developing Leadership Capacities
- Promoting Research
- Serving the Community⁵⁸

These efforts must take into account the continual churn of generations of students, and the natural rate of replacement and augmentation of the number of faculty, staff, administrators and trustees that serve the institution. In the long run, the success of these efforts rests upon institutional buy-in, planning, assessment, leadership AND funding.

The "Ladder of Engagement" and Vincentian Heritage Tours to France

Since the year 2000 the university has offered regularly-scheduled Vincentian Heritage Trip opportunities to students, faculty, staff, senior leadership, and trustees.⁵⁹ While these tours to the traditional Vincentian sites in Paris and across France have never been marketed as "pilgrimages," it is accurate to understand their purpose within this traditional model as broadly defined. Not using the word "pilgrimage" has been an intentional choice. The **highest common denominator** among our trip participants is not a particular religious faith, but rather a shared commitment to a values-based institutional mission within

⁵⁷ To consult the university's strategic planning documents for their mission foci visit: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/strategic-directions/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁸ See: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/about/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁹ For more information on the various Vincentian Heritage Tours offered by DePaul's Office of Mission and Values see: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/Programs/Tours/Pages/default.aspx>

an academic community. Thus, these trips are described and marketed as “heritage” or “study” tours. The study tour model, however, **does encourage** participants to find an anchor for their personal support of the university’s mission and values and its Vincentian Heritage within their own religious or values tradition. However, the Heritage tours also operate on the unapologetic premise that the institutional hospitality offered through a Vincentian lens is rooted in the Roman Catholic Church’s long and rich tradition of pilgrim hospitality and inclusivity. After all Vincent de Paul was not primarily an educator, or a social worker, or a politician, but rather a zealous Roman Catholic priest.

The Heritage trips are very selective and seek out members of the university community who have demonstrated high levels of engagement with the university’s mission and identity. By bringing these already engaged members to even higher levels of engagement together with like-minded colleagues (or fellow students), the strengthening of this identity takes place not only for an individual but also for the community. To demonstrate its commitment to the continuing education and Vincentian formation for members of the community, the university provides significant levels of funding, infrastructure, and personnel to support these trips. For example, on the bi-annual faculty/staff trip the university pays one-third of the trip’s costs, in order to guarantee departmental buy-in the individual’s department contributes one-third, and to encourage an individual’s full commitment they are asked to contribute one-third. However, no qualified faculty or staff member is ever turned away from the trip because of an inability to afford even the modest one-third of the trips costs. Also, the time that a staff member devotes to preparing for the trip, and the time spent on the trip, is release time. No one need use any vacation, or other personal time, in order to participate. Student leaders receive an even more generous subsidy to support their participation. Also, no student is ever turned away from the trip because of an inability to pay.

All of these tours are preceded by the delivery of extensive Vincentian historical and spiritual content designed to meet the following four learning goals for trip participants:

- To separate the Vincent of “myth” from the Vincent of “history”; Vincent de Paul the “person” from Vincent de Paul the “saint.”
- To contextualize Vincent de Paul fully within his own seventeenth-century world.
- To recover the role of Louise de Marillac and women in founding the Vincentian tradition.
- To suggest the contemporary relevance of the Vincentian tradition in the first quarter of the twenty-first century in general, and at DePaul University in particular.

For example, the trip for student leaders is preceded by a required ten week Winter Quarter course (with four hours of academic credit) entitled: “The Life and Times of Vincent de Paul.” A week-long Vincentian Heritage trip to France follows over spring break. The Faculty/Staff trip participants meet for monthly one hour sessions for six months preceding the late summer trip. There are also sessions that prepare the participants for travel, and



Pictures taken of the group on a recent Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*



which set clear ground rules and expectations for behavior to enhance the experience for all group members.

“Well-planned, well-prepared, and well-led”

From the perspective of hospitality, in order for any guided tour or pilgrimage to be deemed successful it must fulfill its promises to its participants. No trip, however, can be successful without also being enjoyable. In turn, no trip can be enjoyable unless it is well-planned and well-led. In order for these Vincentian Heritage trips to be successful in helping their participants, as promised, climb up a few steps on the “ladder of engagement” as members of the DePaul University community they must be enjoyable. This goal is not as easy to achieve as one may think. To begin with, the Vincentian content delivered before and during the trip must be delivered by someone who is an expert on the life and times of Vincent de Paul and Vincentian history, spirituality, and praxis broadly considered. In addition, the presenter must be a good teacher and especially adept at concise and informative presentations at a level appropriate to the group both in the classroom, and “on the road.” The content must also be planned keeping in mind the specific sites which are going to be on the itinerary. This means that the itinerary itself must be comprised of carefully chosen Vincentian sites selected in light of the purposes and length of the specific trip.

We use a “whisper” system for the delivery of content on the road. These systems provide the presenter with a headset and transmitter and each participant with a light-weight receiver and ear phones. This system allows the presenter to preserve his/her voice and to speak clearly over the ocean of background noises that naturally surround tours while on the road, and especially out in the open. They also allow the participants to

hear the presenter clearly at a variety of distances. This is a major enhancement, and is now standard equipment for any high-quality guided tours. Given the number of trips sponsored by DePaul we have invested in our own whisper system.

The hospitality of a successful Vincentian Heritage trip demands that the experience be **humane**. This means that the pace must be reasonable, and must take into account the needs of the participants for clean, comfortable, and safe accommodations, adequate rest, frequent humanity breaks, good meals, hydration needs, shopping opportunities, and adequate personal time. A trip which does not recognize or honor these participant needs, or which makes them secondary to the content to be delivered, or the sites to be visited, will not be an enjoyable experience for the participants, nor make for a successful trip.

On one of our first Heritage Trips sponsored for DePaul's Board of Trustees, a wife of a trustee uttered the memorable observation: "Thank God Saint Vincent was from Paris, and not Peoria." On these Heritage Trips there is a real danger of "Vincent overload," and this overload is carefully avoided by the opportunities that the trip provides for the participants to also take advantage of all that Paris and France can offer a visitor: from sights, to food, wine, shopping, museums, art, music and culture. Another important aspect of hospitality that makes a trip such as this successful is adequate staffing. On our trips, in addition to the presenter, and the bus driver provided by our travel agency (who serves as the liaison with the hotels and restaurants on our itinerary), there is another staff person who is primarily responsible for the whisper system and the perpetual "counting" of participants. Significant staff time is also devoted to working with participants before the trip begins to obtain copies of travel documents, identify food restrictions, make arrangements for payments or payroll deductions, or plan. This staff person also spends substantial time communicating with our partner travel agency.

Our Heritage Trips would be impossible without a partnership with a top-notch, full-service travel agency. We have been very fortunate to find just such a firm in Witte Travel and Tours of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Not all travel agencies are created equal, and the success of a Heritage trip such as DePaul's depends on the agency's familiarity with the unique needs of a heritage or pilgrimage journey. Witte's "Spiritual Journeys" department led by Jane Larson is our indispensable partner in ensuring the success of all our trips from beginning to end. The best laid travel plans of an individual, or group, are no guarantee against unforeseen events ranging from personal medical emergencies, deaths in the family, wildcat strikes, or natural disasters. At these times the ready and efficient back-up assistance of a travel agency is indispensable.

Conclusion: "Walking in his footsteps...."

Since they first began in 2000 the Office of Mission and Values has offered more than thirty Vincentian Heritage Tours for over 700 faculty, staff, students, senior leaders, and trustees. The evaluations of participants have always been overwhelmingly positive. Participants have remarked on the great value of learning much more about Vincent de

Paul: his life and times and his faith and values. They also are touchingly eloquent in describing the powerful impact of walking in his footsteps, of visiting his birthplace, the church in Folleville, the church in Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne, and above all his reliquary shrine in Paris. In addition, these participants are quite articulate in describing the direct impact of this experience in bringing a greater depth of meaning to their day-to-day work at the university, serving our students in the spirit of Vincent de Paul. In short, they are drawn through this experience to climb even higher on the “ladder of engagement.”

Since I have led each of these Heritage trips, I am often asked if I ever get tired of the experience. My honest response is no. As a historian I have spent my career studying Vincent de Paul, his life and times, and four subsequent centuries of Vincentian history. As DePaul’s Senior Executive for University Mission I have spent almost twenty years in mission effectiveness work striving with my colleagues to maintain our precious identity as a “mission-driven” institution. Each group I lead is a new experience, a new opportunity to share the fruits of my research; a new opportunity to share my passion for the Vincentian and Catholic mission of DePaul University in service to the students whom God in his providence has entrusted to us. Without fail, on each tour I am asked questions that I have never been asked before. I ask myself questions, I haven’t asked before, and I am reminded that with each of these Heritage trips I am also climbing higher and higher on the “ladder of engagement.”



1^{eres} Aumônes de Vincent de Paul.

1841.3367

Challamel edit 4 R. de l'Abbay. F. S^t G.^{re}

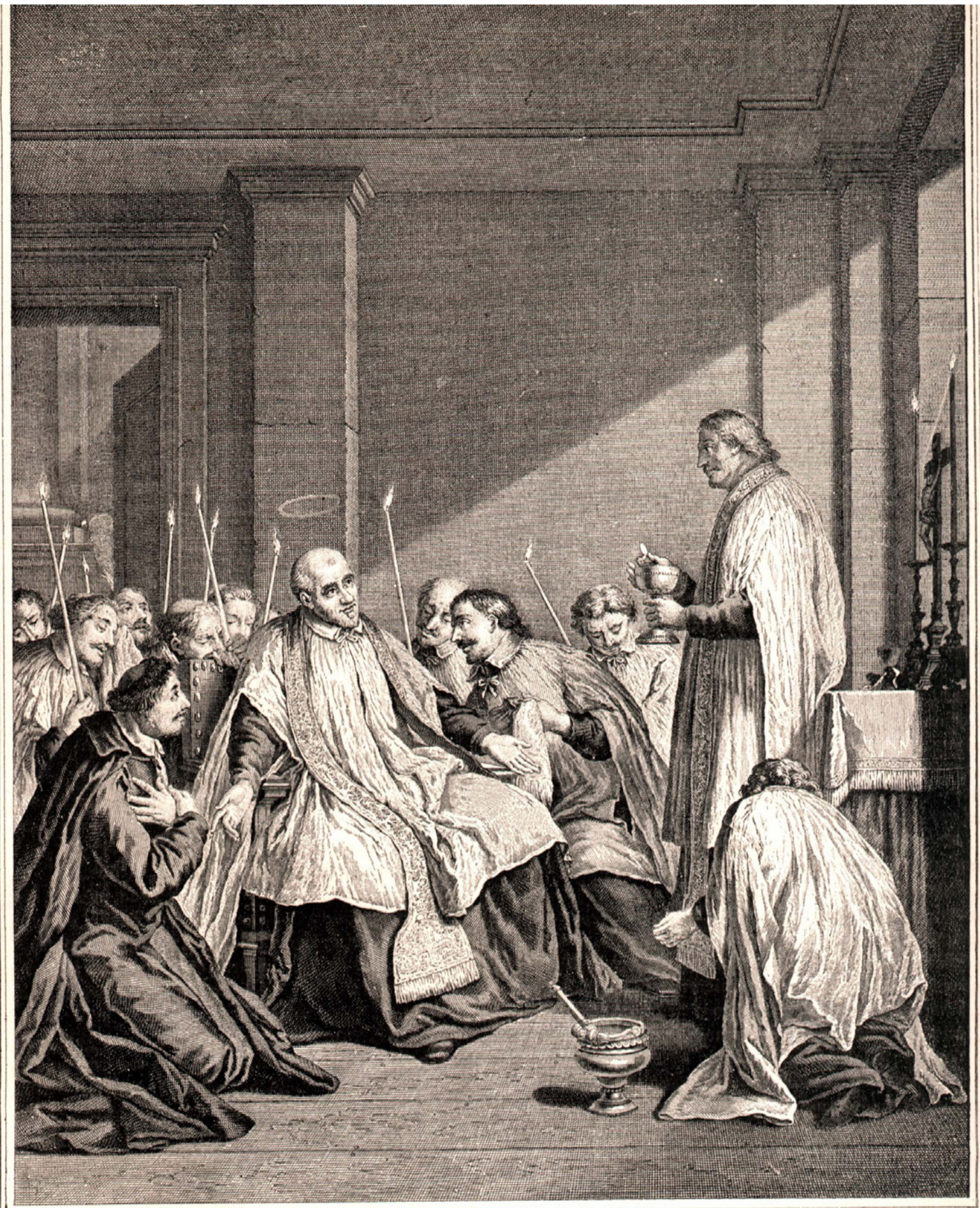
Vincent de Paul as a boy, giving alms to the poor.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





*Gravé à l'eau forte par F. Griffois
et terminé au burin par Jaurès.*

*B. Vincentius in extremis positus, sacrâ
Communionem reficitur.*

The death of Vincent de Paul; receiving Viaticum.

Period etching.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute





The reliquary shrine enclosing the remains of Vincent de Paul. His face and hands are covered in a wax mask. Installed in the Vincentian *maison-mère* in 1830.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





The official portrait of Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.
Fourteenth Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission.
Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute





Vincent's Circle, located at the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University, Chicago, IL.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute





Pictures taken of the group on a recent
Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*





Picture taken of the group on a recent
Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*

